PROVINCE
OF
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Speech from the Throne

At The Opening of the

First Session

of the

Fifty-seventh General Assembly

of the Province of

Prince Edward Island

June 9th, 1986

THE HONOURABLE
LLOYD G. MacPHAIL

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF THE PROVINCE
OF
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

It is my privilege, in the name of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, to welcome you to the First Session of the Fifty-seventh General Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island.

It is appropriate that I take this opportunity to offer my congratulations to the Members who now take up their responsibilities in this new Assembly.

The people of Prince Edward Island have chosen you through the democratic process to represent their interests in this Assembly. They have placed their trust and their faith in you, to carry on the business of the Province in a fair, just and equitable manner.

That is the essence of democracy and the foundation of our democratic system, with its firmly entrenched traditions, conventions and rights. We only have to observe the world around us to see what can happen when those basic beliefs, founded upon respect for the individual and equality for all, are ignored.

The will of the people must endure, or violence, subversion and terrorism will prevail.

A new Government was elected on April twenty-first to serve the people. It was chosen by people who shared its vision of what this Province can and should be.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government placed a set of fundamental beliefs before the people of the Province during the General Election of this year.

My Government placed its policy for development of the Province before the people.

And my Government shared a vision of the Province with the people.

My Government proposed specific initiatives to translate that shared vision into policy and action on behalf of the people of the Province.

Accordingly, my Government will ask the Members of this Legislature to consider a legislative program which contains a number of proposals regarded, by the people, and my Government, as priority matters.

It is a program that will begin the task of putting that shared vision into action. It will not contain everything the people or my Government might desire. It is a beginning, based upon immediate needs and upon what can be achieved in this legislative session.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

Islanders enjoy an unsurpassed quality of life. We are the envy of many Canadians. My Government is dedicated to policies that are consistent with our quality of life and compatible with the natural and human resources with which our Province is blessed.

We cannot separate our Province from the world and the environment in which it exists. What we can do is take advantage of the technological and information explosion which makes our markets as near as the closest communications network.

My Government believes that we can develop a range of opportunity for Prince Edward Islanders which is sensitive to, and in harmony with, the two basic elements of our society - the family and the community.

The preservation, enhancement and stimulation of family and community life is the ultimate aim of my Government's legislative proposals.

Our Province is an agricultural community, the family farm is the pulse of our rural communities, the vital sign by which we can measure the health of our provincial economy.

The current trend in agriculture is that of increasing costs of production, and falling prices for farm products. The social and economic costs of this situation are the breakdown of the family farm and the indignity of financial failure.

My Government has made a start towards helping farmers achieve greater financial stability, with the introduction of the Farm Credit Review Board.

My Government does not pretend that this single action will resolve all the financial problems of every farmer. It will, however, provide expertise and advice for farmers in financial difficulty. The Board will act as an intermediary between farmers and lending institutions. Its purpose is to bring interim financial stability to the farming community.

The long-term solution lies elsewhere. If agriculture is to flourish as an industry, we must be able to sell what we produce. We must be in touch with marketing and consumer trends around the world. We must adjust and diversify our production to meet the demand.

My Minister of Agriculture has begun work toward the creation of an innovative centre for research and development of food production and marketing - the Food and Fibre Institute. My Minister will inform you of progress already made and of the role the institute will play in the creation of opportunities for Island farmers.

The fishing industry is an important contributor to the economy of our Province. The increased emphasis that my Government will be placing on the fishery is evidenced by the creation of a separate Department of Fisheries.

Our fishermen and processors are establishing a reputation as producers of top quality fish products and my Government will continue quality incentive programs aimed at strengthening that reputation. Marketing and promotional programs will be initiated to ensure that quality P.E.I. fish products are given the proper exposure in the marketplace.

The fishery represents a strong employment base in many communities throughout the Province and the opportunity exists to expand upon that base. Initiatives will be undertaken to increase production of value-added products which will, in turn, increase economic benefits from our fishery resource. Continued encouragement will be provided to our successful and emerging aquaculture sector and my Government will assist the shellfish industry to build on the successful production recorded in recent years.

Priority will be given to the extension role of the Department of Fisheries to ensure that programs and services are provided to fishing communities and that the views and concerns of fishermen and processors are effectively presented to government.

My Government is aware of the impact that Federal Government resource allocation and management measures have on our fishery. In this regard, we intend to work with our fishermen and processors to aggressively represent their interests in the broader context of the Atlantic fishery.

My Minister of Tourism has undertaken two initiatives with respect to that important industry. My Minister will inform you of the creation of a Tourism Advisory Board, and of plans to have the P.E.I. Convention Bureau operated by the hospitality industry.

My Government believes that it is essential that those involved in tourism are provided with the opportunity to become more prominent in the direction and development of their industry.

My Government has said that it wishes to encourage the creation of jobs throughout the Province. This policy is aimed at the preservation of the family and community as the bedrock of our Island society.

To this end, my Government has created the Employment Development Program. Its purpose is to provide Island employers with the financial assistance necessary to create additional jobs.

My Government will assist existing industry to achieve its potential. Assistance will be provided to Georgetown Shipyard to acquire a synchrolift facility. The addition of this facility will enable the shipyard to compete for contracts for work on vessels of a larger size. Such a significant expenditure will, however, be subject to a close examination by Policy Board and Treasury Board to ensure the long-term economic well-being of the communities involved.

My Government will be developing a new industrial strategy aimed at attracting secondary industry which can build on the economic activity generated by our primary resources.

The strategy will be directed toward finding, and working with, industries which are compatible with the Island lifestyle and which are prepared to make a long-term commitment to the Island community.

My Government has taken an important first step to strengthen and develop local communities. You will be asked to consider the establishment of the Community Economic Development Fund. Its purpose will be to provide assistance to local community enterprises and organizations for establishment and expansion of small business in the local community.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government believes that a concern for the health and well-being of Islanders is fundamental to social policy.

My Government will immediately expand the Dental Care Program to include young Islanders aged fifteen and sixteen, and, next year, will extend dental care to cover all young Islanders aged four to sixteen inclusive.

My Government will introduce a program to assist senior citizens in the purchase of prescription drugs.

My Government will create a women's division within the Department of Labour to represent the special interests of women and to recommend programs that will provide special assistance to women entering and re-entering the labour force.

My Government will consult with the students of Holland College and the University of Prince Edward Island to determine the effectiveness of the Student Loan and Bursary Program, with a view to making improvements in the existing program.

My Government is concerned about the preservation of one of our most valuable assets - our natural environment. My Government has determined that a Provincial Conservation Strategy must be developed in order to repair the damage done by abuse and neglect and to preserve our environment for future generations.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government believes in the process of consultation with the people in the development of specific government policy. The process takes time, but it is necessary if government is to remain in touch with the will of the people.

My Government has begun this process. It will form the basis for the development of policy initiatives which will be brought to future sessions of this Assembly.

These initiatives will include:

— The introduction of guidelines for the implementation of the concept of equal pay for work of equal value for provincial government employees.

— The introduction of a Driver Education Program with a special emphasis on alcohol education. This program will be developed in consultation with the Department of Education and the private sector.

— Changes to the CIVIL SERVICE ACT to give civil servants political rights which are theirs by virtue of living in a democratic society.

— The provision of financial assistance to daycare centres and kindergartens across Prince Edward Island.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government is concerned about the changing nature of the relationship between the provinces and the Federal Government.

My Government believes that true federalism must involve a partnership between the two levels of Government.

Our Province is the smallest, yet a full and equal, partner in the Canadian Confederation. It is incumbent upon my Government to represent the interests of Islanders with responsibility and vigor and in a manner that will ensure that we receive the benefits of Confederation that we deserve.

In the months ahead, representatives of my Government will present the interests of Prince Edward Islanders to the Federal Government on a range of issues. These are issues which may have a profound effect on the economic and political future of our Province.

None of these issues is more far-reaching in its implications than the free trade negotiations currently underway between Canada and the United States of America.

My Government has appointed the Honourable Minister of Justice as the Minister Responsible for Trade. He will be involved in detailed negotiations with the Federal Government aimed at protecting the Province's interests.

My Government will pursue other matters with the Federal Government in the same manner with responsible, vigorous negotiation on those issues which have a direct effect and impact on the economy of the Province and the well-being of Islanders.

The Federal Government's policy of attempting to reduce the national debt through cuts in programs and services and increases in charges and levies for services provided, creates specific problems for our Province.

My Government will impress upon the Federal Government that the equal application of this policy on a national basis creates its own inequality. My Government will resist this inequality on behalf of all Islanders.

The same approach will be seen in my Government's negotiaions with the Federal Government over Prince Edward Island's traditional fishing boundaries, quota allocations, and new species licenses.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

In addition to the measures already specified, you will be asked to consider a variety of legislative proposals, including:

— a new PHARMACARE ACT;

— a new CONFLICT OF INTEREST ACT, to provide guidelines for the conduct of government members and their families;

— AN ACT TO AMEND THE LABOUR ACT, to enable striking workers to return to their jobs upon the satisfactory settlement of labour disputes;

— AN ACT TO AMEND THE ELECTION EXPENSES ACT;

— AN ACT TO AMEND THE MENTAL HEALTH ACT;

— AN ACT TO AMEND THE ELECTRIC POWER AND TELEPHONE ACT;

— AN ACT TO AMEND THE PETROLEUM PRODUCTS ACT;

— AN ACT TO AMEND THE UNIVERSITY ACT;

— AN ACT TO AMEND THE VITAL STATISTICS ACT; and

— AN ACT TO AMEND THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ACT.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

You will also be asked to appropriate the funds for the services and payments required by this Assembly.

The Public Accounts and reports of the various departments and agencies of my Government, for the year ending March 31st, 1985, will be tabled for your information. The interim report, forecasting estimated revenues and expenditures for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 1986, and Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the fiscal year beginning April 1st, 1986, will also be presented for your consideration.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government believes that the strong mandate it received from the people of Prince Edward Island is an expression of a desire for change in the direction of government policy.

That strong mandate is also an expression of confidence in my Government's ability to introduce a program for change which will build on the strengths of our natural and human resources, the family and the local community.

MONSIEUR L'ORATEUR ET MEMBRES DE L'ASSEMBLEE LEGISLATIVE:

Puisse la divine Providence vous guider dans vos délibérations.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

May Divine Providence guide your deliberations.